

FOCUS

Missouri

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March 3, 2006

HEADLINE NEWS

Seven Missouri Companies Noted for Good Corporate Reputations



Fortune magazine has released its "Most Admired Companies" for 2006, which includes seven from the Show Me State: A.G. Edwards, Anheuser-Busch, DST Systems, Emerson Electric, Graybar Electric, Leggett & Platt and Peabody Energy. The survey rates the corporate reputations of the largest

American companies based on innovation, employee talent, use of corporate assets, social responsibility, quality of management, financial soundness, long-term investment and quality of products/services. [Read more...](#)

Blunt Calls on Automakers to Increase E85 Vehicle Production

Gov. Matt Blunt joined governors from across the country earlier this week to recognize automakers for producing more flexible fuel vehicles and calling on the auto industry to step up production of even more vehicles that operate on 85 percent ethanol or E85. Blunt is the first Missouri governor to include full funding for the Ethanol Incentive Fund in his budget to the General Assembly and he has made a proposal that, if passed, would require all gasoline for motor vehicle use sold in the state to contain 10 percent ethanol. [Read more...](#)



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Monterrey, Mexico
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March 8, 2006
["Making CAFTA-DR Work For YOU"](#)

March 16 - 22, 2006
Mexico City, Centro Banamex
[Mexico 2006 4th World Water Forum](#)

March 17 - 28, 2006
[Governor's Trade Mission to Europe](#)

March 20 - 22, 2006
[IEDC 2006 Economic Development Summit](#)

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TREND SIGHTS



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Business Climate Comparison Tool Online



MERIC is pleased to announce the launch of its Business Climate Comparison (BCC) web tool for U. S. states. This unique online tool allows users to compare any number of states across 72 important site location indicators. The BCC also includes a dynamic mapping function and data download feature. [Read more...](#)

Talent Shortages May Lead to Employment Opportunities

A recent survey by Manpower Inc. found that labor markets around the world are experiencing talent shortages. In the U.S., 44 percent of those surveyed reported difficulty filling positions, like sales representatives, engineers and nurses. However, shortages in these fields can create opportunities for Missouri jobseekers.

[Read more...](#)



State Grants to Address Housing, Water Needs

The DED recently approved two grants to assist with infrastructure needs in Southeast Missouri. Dunklin Co. received approval for a \$200,000 CDBG housing grant on behalf of Family Counseling Center, Inc. The funds will be used to provide affordable housing for the homeless who suffer from mental health and/or substance abuse disabilities. New Madrid Co. will receive a \$64,025 CDBG water grant on behalf of New Madrid County PWSD No. 1 to connect 13 Lilbourn residences to the county's public water system. [Read more...](#)



Annual Branson Job Fair a Success

Over 450 job seekers visited with 35 registered businesses during the Annual Branson Job Fair hosted by the Missouri Employer Committee on February 25. The event drew a mix of new and current employers from the Branson area, many of whom hired individuals on the spot. At the conclusion of the job fair, the employers stated they were impressed with the number of good quality applicants and hope for a second job fair to be conducted in early May when many new stores in the Branson area will be opening with tourist season being in full swing.



Joplin Dedicates Innovation Center

Sara Newman and Joplin officials recently dedicated "The Joe," a new innovation center named in honor of Joseph Newman, a longtime economic development advocate in the Joplin area. The center is located next door to the Joplin Area Chamber of Commerce and will be managed by the chamber foundation to offer services to early stage entrepreneurs to develop promising advanced-technology companies.

[Read more...](#)

March 21, 2006

["Intellectual Property Rights: Understanding and Safeguarding Your Interests Abroad"](#)

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AmerenCDC Grant Applications Available

The Ameren Community Development Corporation (AmerenCDC) announced this week that applications are now available for the first 2006 cycle of AmerenCDC grants. The AmerenCDC funds projects that promote economic development and job growth in AmerenUE's electric service territory in Missouri. To date, the AmerenCDC has awarded \$5.7 million of the total \$9 million in funding available for projects. [Read more...](#)

Neosho, Newton Co. Win Enhanced Enterprise Zone Status

The DED has approved enhanced enterprise zone status for portions of the city of Neosho and Newton County to help create jobs and spur private investment in the area by providing state and local benefits to companies that expand or locate in the zone. The new zone's boundaries will include areas within the northeastern and southern half of Neosho, including unincorporated areas along the east, south and southwest parts of the city and supporting development within Neosho's Industrial Park and The Underground in the northeast part of town. [Read more...](#)

Springfield Career Center Hosts Career Morning

The Division of Workforce Development's Springfield Career Center hosted their semi-annual Career Morning earlier this week. The event featured break out sessions and one-on-one meetings with local business representatives. Approximately 350 job seekers were in attendance; along with 20 individuals representing 12 businesses. Business representatives provided information about their company, hiring practices and job openings. The guest speaker was Kirk Elmquist, vice president of Sales and Marketing for the Springfield Cardinals.

Jefferson City Career Center to Host Job Fair

The Jefferson City Career Center, located at 1716 Four Seasons Drive, will host "Job Fair Jefferson City" from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 6 and 7. Doors will open for set up at 8 a.m. each day. Admission is free. The Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce will host a hospitality area and KRCG channel 13, a co-sponsor, will advertise the event in April. For more information, call 573-526-8115 or email [Herald Bullock](#) for further details.

AGP Plans Bio Diesel Facility in St. Joseph

Ag Processing Inc., a cooperative in the renewable fuels industry, has announced plans to build a new soy biodiesel plant in St. Joseph. The Omaha-based cooperative will develop the plant on its industrial site where it currently operates a soybean crushing plant and a vegetable oil refinery that is undergoing an expansion. The plant, which is expected to become operational in the fall of 2007, will produce 28 million gallons of soy biodiesel annually and employ about 24 people.

[Read more...](#)

Solutia Provides Film for Ford Vehicles

In looking at supplier companies to Ford Motor Company, one may be surprised to see Solutia. Solutia Automotive produces polyvinyl butyral (PVB) interlayer products for laminated glass, which is used by the auto industry in most windshields. The specialized glass made from the company's film is being supplied to Ford Motor Co. for its concept vehicle, the Super Chief, and the new 2007 Lincoln Navigator. Solutia holds 45 percent of the global market for PVB interlayers used in laminated glass windshields. [Read more...](#)

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[Missouri Enterprise Business Assistance Center](#)

Life Sciences and Renewable Fuels Drive Indiana's Economy



State and local incentives, as well as research and development efforts in Indiana, are fueling expansions in the life sciences industry, particularly in medical device firms. Zimmer, NEMCOMED, MedVenture Technology Corp., Cook Pharmica LLC, BioConvergence, Tate & Lyle and Sentry Logistics Solutions are among companies planning expansions in the Hoosier State. These projects will add over 1,000 jobs to the state's economy. [Read more...](#)

North Carolina Research Campus Breaks Ground

California financier David Murdock and North Carolina state officials broke ground last week on the Core Lab Building which will be the centerpiece of the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis. Duke University has agreed to manage the 311,000 square foot building that will house research facilities for the UNC System and attract businesses and university scientists to the \$1 billion "biopolis." While Murdock is funding the facility through a \$150 million donation to a nonprofit foundation committed to the campus, Duke will build an Institute for Translational Medicine on the campus as well. [Read more...](#)



Greater Baltimore Group Honors Biotech Company



The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) recently honored Alba Therapeutics as an example of a "formidable resource" for building a prosperous life sciences economy in the region. Alba Therapeutics, which is working with the University of Maryland School of Medicine to develop treatments for celiac disease and diabetes, pulled together one of the largest venture funding rounds of 2005 by raising \$30 million in a Series A financing round.

[Read more...](#)

Maryland Scientists, Biotech Team Work on Drug Development

University of Maryland research center scientists are teaming up with a Rockville bioscience company to develop new drugs using nanotechnology, which involves the manipulation of atoms and molecules to create materials at scales less than 100 nanometers or a few billionths of a meter. University post-doctorate fellows will work with Rexahn Pharmaceuticals to make stronger cancer-fighting drugs and central nervous system therapies by using "nanomedicine." [Read more...](#)



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March 10, 2006

HEADLINE NEWS

Blunt Announces Plans to Build on Record Breaking Export Numbers



Gov. Matt Blunt will head a trade delegation of Missouri business leaders later this month to visit with European community and business leaders to promote business and trade with the Show Me State. The trade mission is also expected to help build on record breaking export numbers of \$10.5 billion reported last month. Blunt and the Missouri delegation will visit Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom and Belgium between March 17 and 28. See calendar item or [read more...](#)

General Revenue Collections Climbed Again in February

The Office of Administration reports that February 2006 net general revenue collections increased by 9.7 percent over the year, from \$351.5 million last February to \$385.7 million this February. Overall, 2006 fiscal year-to-date net general revenue collections have increased by 6.1 percent, from \$4.19 billion last year to \$4.44 billion this year. Over the fiscal year-to-date, corporate income and corporate franchise tax collections have increased 38.6 percent for the year, and sales and use tax collections have risen 2.3 percent. [Read more...](#)



St. Louis Metro: Hot Spot for Investment in 2005



St. Louis was ranked No. 7 in *Site Selection* magazine's 2005 ranking of Top 10 Metros by Investment, with over \$2 billion in investments in 2005. The magazine identified the top 10 metros by number of projects and investment. The neighboring Chicago/Naperville/Joliet metro secured top honors in both categories with more new and expanded corporate facility projects (389) and the highest amount of investment (over \$6.5 billion) in 2005 than any other metro area. [Read more...](#)

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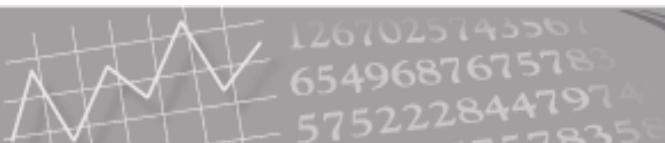
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(Click on Events)

March 21 - 23, 2006

[National Association of Manufacturers \(NAM\)](#)

National Manufacturing Week Trade Show



Canada Accounts for 41 Percent of Missouri's Record Exports in 2005



In 2005, Missouri businesses exported a record \$10.5 billion in products and services to 232 countries around the world. Missouri's top ten export recipients during the year were Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Japan, China, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Australia, accounting for 80% of the state's export revenues. [Read more...](#)

Missouri Third in Nation in Small Business Health Insurance Costs

Looking for your under-10-employee business to thrive? Living in Missouri and the Midwest helps: a medical expenditure survey lists the Show Me State third lowest for small private-sector, employer-provided family health insurance costs for 2003. [Read more...](#)



FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

State Tax Credits to Redevelop Syndicate Trust Building

Brownfield Redevelopment Program tax credits were approved for the rehabilitation of the Syndicate Trust Building into a mixed use facility that will house several new businesses and support at least 268 new jobs. The tax credits will help offset costs involved in the cleanup of environmentally hazardous materials at the site, which has been vacant for the past decade. [Read more...](#)

FOCUS ON WORKFORCE

Skilled Workforce FAQs

In February, the Division of Workforce Development announced the Skilled Workforce Initiative competitive funding for local Workforce Investment Boards. Information regarding this initiative, as well as a list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, can be found at [Skilled Workforce Initiative](#). Be sure to check this site often as new Q&As are being added. Remember, the deadline for applications is March 31.

FOCUS ON BUSINESS

Good Humor-Breyers Announces Expansion

Unilever is adding state-of-the-art production lines at its Good Humor-Breyers facility in Sikeston. The \$17 million, 70-job project will add four lines and more mix-making capability, bringing the total number of product lines up to 14. DED approved a \$504,000 CDBG industrial [infrastructure grant](#) for the city of Sikeston to help make wastewater improvements necessary for the expansion. [Read more...](#)

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Grants Target Children in Need

The Mattel Children's Foundation's mission is to better the lives of children in need. Through the foundation's Domestic Grants Program, nonprofit organizations throughout the U.S. that directly serve children in need are eligible for grants in the amounts of \$5,000 to \$25,000. In 2006, applications will be accepted from January 1 through April 7 and July 1 through September 30. [Read more...](#)

Public Water System Improvements in Laredo

The Missouri Department of Economic Development approved a \$227,900 CDBG grant for the city of Laredo. The funds will be used to construct a new water storage tank and replace the water main connecting the storage tank to the Linn-Livingston Public Water Supply District No. 3, the source of the city's potable water. The Department of Natural Resources also provided a loan for this project. [Read more...](#)

DED Hosts Southern Growth Community Forum

DED Director Greg Steinhoff and DWD Director Rod Nunn held a live video conference with Missouri Workforce Investment Boards last week to discuss the effects and challenges presented by the changing nature of technology, innovation and the state's workforce. The Southern Growth Community Forum provided a unique setting for the state's workforce development system leaders to identify critical workforce development issues facing Missouri and openly discuss how innovation, technology and globalization, as well as the overall changing nature of the workforce and the vital role of Missouri communities are driving economic development. Participating were representatives from the following WIBs: Ozark, Southeast, West Central, South Central, Jefferson/Franklin and St. Charles. Additional forums will be conducted across the state. [Read more...](#)

Paul Mueller Co. Increases Work Force

Springfield-based steel manufacturer Paul Mueller Co. is adding 50 welders, grinders and production workers, along with nine sales, project management and design jobs to its work force. With a \$9.5 million increase in orders and net sales of \$138.1 million for 2005, CEO and President Matt Detelich said the company is more prepared than ever to accommodate the always-shifting steel market. [Read more...](#)

Maryland Heights Company Gets Contracts, Moves to New Facility

The Imaging Division at Biomedical Systems was recently awarded contracts from four pharmaceutical companies as part of clinical trials seeking FDA drug approvals. Biomedical Systems, which provides pharmaceutical services, cardiology services and products, women's health services, wound-care products and veterinary services, relocated this month to a larger facility adjacent to the company's headquarters in Maryland Heights. [Read more...](#)

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Georgia Will Bid on Bio-, Agro-defense Research Facility



The University of Georgia and the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Innovation and Technology Office are leading efforts to attract the federal government's proposed 500,000-square-foot National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The Georgia Research alliance, other state higher educational institutions, and key industry stakeholders and businesses would also lend support to the Georgia proposal. The development would create 500 federal jobs and could create an impact of \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion in wages/salaries and an estimated \$3.5 billion to \$6 billion total overall economic impact. [Read more...](#)

Northwest Arkansas Fosters High Tech Startups

NASA research grants are helping the University of Arkansas draw a new breed of research and development companies to the Natural State. Not traditionally known for the high tech industry, northwest Arkansas is now seeing companies like Space Photonics, Lynguent, Arkansas Power Electronics International, C&M Machines and BEI Sensors and Systems doing work for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The university is making technology transfer easier by allowing professors to start companies and license their technology on which the professor and the school hold joint patents. [Read more...](#)



Multiversity - Colleges Partnering Across State Borders



College presidents from the states of Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio met last week to discuss the concept of "multiversity" - working together to provide better service, support and economic development opportunities that benefit both the schools and communities in these states. The unprecedented event provided an opportunity for better working relationships and a forum to discuss how higher education can better serve the tri-state region. [Read more...](#)

Mississippi Incentive Package Nears \$1 Billion for Kia Plant

Mississippi is offering an incentive package worth nearly \$1 billion, including local, state and federal tax breaks, to lure a new Kia assembly plant in Columbus, Miss. Although the proposal may be too late, Mississippi's offer dwarfs other states' proposals to automakers. Use of the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005, which gives special federal tax incentives to businesses that create jobs in the area hit by Hurricane Katrina, would provide an estimated \$240 million tax break to the company. [Read more...](#)



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March 17, 2006

HEADLINE NEWS

January Unemployment Dips to Missouri's Lowest Rate Since 2001



Missouri's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped in January to its lowest rate since September 2001, falling to 4.7 percent - a half a point lower than December's revised rate of 5.2 percent, while non-farm payroll employment grew slightly over the month. [Read more...](#)

New Missouri Incentives Draw Promises of 7,500 Jobs

A year after Gov. Matt Blunt called for Missouri to change how it uses tax incentives to encourage job growth, 34 companies have signed onto a new state program, promising to create or retain around 7,500 high-paying jobs over the next three to five years.



"We believe the Quality Jobs initiative is a great tool for business owners and entrepreneurs to create jobs or move jobs here," said Blunt spokesman Spence Jackson, adding that the governor is "very pleased" with the reaction to the program since it became available in August. "The fact is Missouri suffered devastating jobs losses during the previous four years and we had to take steps or our state would have faced irreparable economic harm." [Read more...](#)

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MERIC and DWD Launch Missouri Career Guide



Coming to a Career Center near you - the 2006-07 *Missouri Career Guide*. It's the indispensable resource to finding the perfect career, getting the training and financing to make that career happen, then using time-tested techniques to jump-start it - whether you're 16 and new to the job world or 60 and in transition. It's packed with self-assessment tests, interview tips and web sites. [Read more...](#)

Profiling Missouri's Regions: Upper South Central

Missouri's Upper South Central Region is made up of Camden, Dent, Laclede, Maries, Miller, Morgan, Phelps and Pulaski counties, including the Lake of the Ozarks area, Fort Leonard Wood and Rolla. The region's population is projected to grow by 10.4 percent from 2005 to 2025, compared to the 9.2 percent projected growth for the state as a whole. [Read more...](#)



Multi-million Dollar Investment Made a Huge Impact on Rural Missouri

A \$588 million dollar investment by USDA Rural Development assisted rural Missouri in financial assistance during 2005. The funds were through a variety of loan and grant programs to provide quality housing, good jobs, clean drinking water plus reliable, modern, essential community facilities and services. [Read more...](#)

Epworth Children & Family Services Receive Tax Credits

Up to \$249,929 in Youth Opportunities Program tax credits were approved for Epworth Children and Family Services in St. Louis. These credits will be used as a fundraising tool to leverage at least \$499,858 in donations. The funds will cover costs associated with the organization's recreational



DWD Employees Named Veterans' Reps of the Year

Division of Workforce Development employees, Jodi Lindsay and George Rangel, with Springfield Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, have been named the Veterans Representatives of the Year by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



Gov. Blunt, Jodi Lindsay



Missouri Research Park Gains \$10M AFB Expansion

AFB International in O'Fallon, the world's largest supplier of pet food flavors, has announced plans to build a new \$10 million headquarters in the Missouri Research Park in St. Charles. The company expects to hire 40 new high-tech employees over five years and will double its total work force in the St. Louis area to adapt to explosive growth. [Read more...](#)

St. Louis Biotech Group Retooling to Improve Success

Two-year-old BioGenerator, a nonprofit group in St. Louis created to generate biotech companies from university research, is being retooled to become more aggressive. The organization is seeking a new chief executive and

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Kansas City

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therapy and activities, as well as therapeutic treatment services provided to youth living in the residential treatment center or to students attending Epworth's special education school. [Read more...](#)

St. Louis Downtown Receives National Award

St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay and downtown rejuvenation organization Downtown Now! were honored with the *National Entrepreneurial American Leadership Award* for the successful revitalization efforts in downtown St. Louis. This prestigious national award was presented by Partners for Livable Communities at its "Celebration of Vision and Community Spirit" annual dinner awards program. [Read more...](#)



Gov. Blunt, George Rangel

Kansas City Gets \$2.3M Grant for New Jobs Training Program

The U.S. Department of Labor has given \$2.3 million in grants to the Kansas City area Metropolitan Community Colleges for an entry-level manufacturing jobs training program. The program will provide free tuition to students for four months of customized training. Graduates of the program will receive job placement in one of 13 area companies that are partners in the program, called the Manufacturing Job-Ready Program. The first class will start mid-summer at the MCC Business & Technology College. Registration is available at 816-482-5210. [Read more...](#)

will reach deep into universities to identify promising technology at early stages that can be patented and licensed for startup firms. [Read more...](#)

Springfield's Dynamic Dozen Lead Economy

The Springfield Business Journal recently honored the 12 fastest-growing companies in the Ozarks with its Dynamic Dozen awards. In order to be eligible for the Dynamic Dozen, companies must have their headquarters in the SBJ's readership area (50-mile radius of Springfield), have annual revenues of at least \$500,000 for the last three years and complete applications that provide their gross revenues for the past three years. CPA firm Elliott, Robinson & Co. evaluates the applications using both dollar and percentage growth and makes the final selections. [Read more...](#)

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Georgia Wins Kia's First U.S. Plant



West Point, Ga. will become home to Kia Motors Corp. first American car-making plant, creating nearly 5,500 jobs for the state. Construction on the \$1.2 billion facility will begin later this year with completion scheduled for 2009. The 2-million-square-foot plant will sit on 3,300 acres and ultimately produce 300,000 cars per year with 2,900 employees. Five additional supply companies are expected to locate near West Point and add another 2,600 jobs. [Read more...](#)

Toyota Will Build Camrys at Indiana Subaru Plant

Toyota Motor Corp. announced this week that it will use Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd.'s plant in Indiana to build the popular Camry sedan. Toyota became Fuji's top shareholder in October and the two companies have been working to find ways to cooperate in production and development. Toyota will invest about \$230 million in new production and 1,000 new jobs will be created. [Read more...](#)



Austin Approves \$3.2M Incentives for HP Data Center



The city of Austin, Texas has approved an incentive package worth \$3.2 million for a Hewlett-Packard data center. Palo Alto, Calif.-based HP is expected to invest \$300 million in personal property, renovations and cleanup and will create 140 jobs. The city is offering "annual economic development grants" to the company that equal 40 percent of the city property tax on the increase in value the company puts into the property over 10 years. [Read more...](#)

San Jose Program Gives Small Businesses a Hand

The San Jose Small Business Ambassador program is assisting small businesses with permitting processes, as well as providing relocation and expansion assistance, development fees cost estimates, inspection processes and tax reductions. The ten-month-old program has tripled its number of client businesses since the first six months of operation to the current level of 25 companies. [Read more...](#)



Defeat of Dubai Port Deal Expected to Have Little Trade Impact



The collapse of the Dubai-owned company's bid to gain control of U.S. port operations is not expected to have a negative economic impact on global trade. Although, if new restrictions are added to laws governing foreign investment in the U.S., that could potentially reduce the number of foreign investors in the U.S. and could lead to retaliation by other countries. Foreign direct investment in the U.S. exceeded \$1.5 trillion in 2004 and U.S. exports totaled \$1.12 trillion in 2005, roughly 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product. (AP photo) [Read more...](#)

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March 24, 2006

HEADLINE NEWS

State Seeks Funds to Lure New Businesses



Hawthorn
FOUNDATION

Department of Economic Development Director Greg Steinhoff is working to retool the Hawthorn Foundation, a nonprofit organization that solicits donations from Missouri industries, chambers of commerce, professional associations and universities, to support state economic development by luring companies interested in expanding or locating to Missouri. [Read more...](#)

Sheryl Crow Pitches Missouri Tourism

With the spring and summer tourism seasons quickly approaching, the Missouri Division of Tourism's 2006 advertising campaign is in full swing, and Kennett native Sheryl Crow is featured prominently in one of the state's print ads. The ad campaign features Missouri celebrities and focuses on driving consumer traffic to [VisitMO.com](#). [Read more...](#)



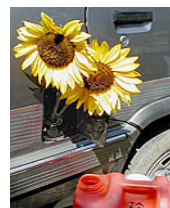
MOHELA Board Reaffirms Loan Sale



More than 100 people attended the public meeting at Lodge of the Four Seasons on Lake of the Ozarks, and 19 people spoke to the matter before the board voted a second time in favor of Gov. Matt Blunt's \$450 million Lewis & Clark Discovery Initiative, according to a news release. [Read more...](#)

Fifth Annual National Biodiesel Day Underscores Industry Growth

The biodiesel industry is experiencing record growth and public awareness of the alternative fuel is steadily increasing. Recent market research conducted for the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) found significant increases in biodiesel awareness among all groups surveyed. [Read more...](#)



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March 30, 2006

["Doing Business with Vietnam and the Philippines"](#)

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March 31, 2006

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Kansas City

April 3 - 6, 2006

[The Maastricht Institute of Entrepreneurship of Missouri Valley College](#)

April 4, 2006

[Kansas City Citizen Diplomacy Summit](#)

April 5 - 6, 2006

[InvestMidwest Venture Capital Forum](#)

Missouri's 131st to be First-Ever Guard Unit Selected for Elite B-2 Mission



U.S. Senator Kit Bond and Congressman Ike Skelton, along with Senator Jim Talent and Governor Matt Blunt, are pleased to announce that the Air Force has selected the 131st Fighter Wing stationed at Lambert International

Airport in St. Louis to join the elite B-2 mission at Whiteman Air Force Base.

[Read more...](#)

Legislative Director Brian Grace Reviews Department's Legislative Priorities

With the House and Senate adjourned for Spring Break, I would like to take a moment to update you on the status of the legislation that we have been promoting and monitoring this year. We will make this feature a weekly occurrence for the last seven weeks of session so please watch closely, as the legislature will soon begin to work at a feverish pace. [Read more...](#)



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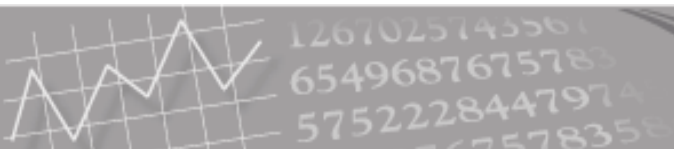
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MERIC
TRENDSIGHTS



New Career Information Products in Missouri Career Centers



New products to help jobseekers make informed career decisions are making their way to Missouri Career Centers. MERIC Workforce Investment Area liaisons have been delivering new career materials to Career Centers around the state. In the new "Career Information" display racks, you will

find the 2006-07 *Missouri Career Guide* along with statewide and regional career outlook information. [Read more...](#)

2005 County Population Estimates

Recently released 2005 county population estimates from the U. S. Census Bureau show that St. Louis County is the most populous county in Missouri with an estimated population of just over 1 million. The estimates data also show that from 2000 to 2005, Christian County was the fastest growing county in the state, growing by nearly 24 percent during the period.

[Read more...](#)



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State Tax Credits to Remediate Former Switzer Building

The Missouri Department of Economic Development approved up to \$850,000 in Brownfield Redevelopment Program remediation tax credits that will help launch a \$12 million redevelopment of the Switzer Building into a mixed use facility that will house several new businesses and support at least 100 new jobs. [Read more...](#)

New Public Sewer System for Elsberry Subdivision

The Missouri Department of Economic Development awarded a \$260,000 wastewater grant to the city of Elsberry on behalf of the Lakeview Subdivision Neighborhood Improvement District. The state funds, granted through the department's Community Development Block Grant Program, will help construct a new sanitary sewer collection and transport system to meet the needs of families in the subdivision, which is located southwest of Elsberry. [Read more...](#)

St. Louis Artworks Receive Youth Opportunities Tax Credits

St. Louis Artworks will receive over \$107,000 in state tax credits to leverage up to \$215,864 in local contributions to help fund their program, which focuses on a wide range of job training and is an important source of

DWD Business Rep. Featured in Newspaper

Regional Workforce Development business representative, Mike Chittum, was the featured profile in this weekend's Jefferson City News Tribune. As a business representative for the state, Mike's area covers 19 counties in Central Missouri. He works with businesses to explain training programs, Career Center services and community needs, as well as facilitate posting employment opportunities to Missouri's job search engine, www.greathires.org. [Read more...](#)

Jefferson City to Host Job Fair

It's been more than five years since the Missouri Career Center has hosted a job fair in the Jefferson City area, but one has now been scheduled for April 6 - 7 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Several local businesses are getting involved as it promises to be a productive recruitment tool. The Fair will focus on communication, government, health and manufacturing industries, along with many others.

K.C. Area Life Sciences Institute's Vision for MO-KS Biotech

Irvine O. Hockaday, Jr., Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute chairman, recently sat down with the Kansas City Star to discuss key bioscience initiatives he has proposed. Hockaday is challenging civic and business leaders to create a biosciences corridor that stretches from Manhattan, Kan. to Columbia, Mo. [Read more...](#)

Enterprise Development Corp. Helps Fund Small Businesses

The Enterprise Development Corporation in Columbia recently received its Microloan Intermediary Lender status from the Small Business Administration. The EDC can provide loans up to \$25,000 to businesses located in Boone, Cooper or Callaway counties that have fewer than five employees and are unable to qualify for adequate conventional financing. [Read more...](#)

Brown Shoe Creates Kid-Inspired Shoes

St. Louis-based Brown Shoe Co. Inc. is introducing a line of character shoes that incorporate the characters Lightning McQueen and Tow Mater from the upcoming Disney/PIXAR animated film "Cars." The company's kids division has also formed a licensing agreement with Nickelodeon. The two companies plan to

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income to over 240 teens throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. [Read more...](#)

Missouri Pork Plant Expansion Begins

Kansas City, Mo.-based pork processor Premium Standard Farms (PSF) broke ground on a new addition to its Milan, Mo. facility. The \$23 million expansion will increase the plant's daily production capacity 35 percent and is expected to create 50 new jobs. [Read more...](#)

collaborate to create and launch several lines of footwear based on Nickelodeon's newest television programs. [Read more...](#)



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missourifocus@ded.mo.gov

GLOBAL NEWS

Lowe's Will Build Colorado Distribution Center



Lowe's Cos. Inc. announced plans last week to spend \$10 million to \$15 million to convert a former Transportation Management Services Inc. facility into a flatbed distribution center in Henderson, Colo. Construction will begin

immediately and upon completion in July will employ 35.

The center will receive rail and truck shipments which will be reloaded onto flatbed trucks for delivery to Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Utah, Idaho, Montana and New Mexico.

[Read more...](#)

Novo Nordisk Inks Deal With North Carolina Biotech Company

Denmark-based pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk will pay up to \$69 million for the license to technology developed by a Durham biotechnology company, Argos Therapeutics. The agreement will help accelerate the clinical development of the technology, which involves the identification of a specific antibody that fights the onset of systemic immune disorders. [Read more...](#)



Nestle To Expand Arkansas Plant



Nestle Prepared Foods Co. will invest \$19.7 million in its Jonesboro, Ark. manufacturing plant, hiring 65 employees this year and 35-45 more next year. Nestle currently makes Stouffer's and Lean Cuisine frozen prepared meals at the Jonesboro facility and will begin to make its Hot Pockets sandwiches there by the first quarter of 2007. Switzerland-based Nestle S.A. is the world's largest food company with sales of \$73 billion in 2005. [Read more...](#)

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HEADLINE NEWS

Missouri Applauded for Tort Reform



Missouri's legal system, thanks to legislation passed last year that limits civil lawsuits, is improving according to a poll of corporate lawyers released Monday by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Missouri moved up five spots to 35th, one of the biggest rises shown by a state in a year's time, said Tom Donohue, president and chief executive of the U.S. Chamber. [Read more...](#)

UMSL Enters a New World with Advent of Express Scripts

For decades, schools such as UMSL have built research parks to help launch small startup firms that were created from a professor's discovery. Last year, the university in north St. Louis County took the aggressive step of luring to its campus the headquarters of Express Scripts Inc. and its 1,200 employees. In striking a deal with the \$15 billion-a-year company, UMSL joins a tiny group of universities playing host not to small research firms, but large corporations. UMSL's deal with Express Scripts follows a recently set goal to make economic development a priority for Missouri's public universities, right alongside teaching and research. [Read more...](#)



Construction to start on Massive Cement Plant



Switzerland-based Holcim Ltd. held a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for one of the country's largest cement plants to be built in Ste. Genevieve County. The plant, a \$600 million facility that will employ 200 workers and manufacture four tons of concrete a year when completed in 2009, will have a \$10 million payroll and provide \$23 million to school district in property taxes. [Read more...](#)

States Ranked by Total Taxes and Per Capital Amount: 2005

State government tax collections reached nearly \$649 billion in fiscal year 2005, a \$57 billion (9.7 percent) increase from 2004, the Census Bureau reported today. Missouri received rankings as the 5th lowest state for per capita taxes paid by citizens and 22nd in total taxes, giving the state an impressive rank overall of 29th lowest in the nation. [See chart...](#)



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April 6 - 7, 2006

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April 7, 2006

[Jacques Chicoineau Lecture: "Lyon, France: Your International Portal to the European Market"](#)

April 9 - 12, 2006

[BIO 2006](#)

Legislative Update: Incentives



Governor Blunt asked the Department of Economic Development to create a committee to analyze every trait of each development incentive within our tool box. Our Incentive Review Committee finalized its analysis and recommendations last November. With the sponsorship of Rep. Tim Flook of Liberty, we have recently filed House Bill 2040 which addresses several of the Incentive Review Committee's recommendations to make our tools more cost efficient for taxpayers and effective and fair for those who use them.

[Read more...](#)



Missouri's Business Climate Comparison Tool in Action: SBIR & STTR Data



Using the Business Climate Comparison (BCC) online tool launched by MERIC, statistics ranging from population and education data to economic indicators can be used to compare Missouri to any number of states. Two indicators under the category of business climate are the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business

Technology Transfer (STTR). These two federally-funded programs allocate money for states to encourage small business research and development. [Read more...](#)

2005 Missouri Electric Rates Improve on 2004's Great Rates

The state's electrical rates in 2005, as measured in cents per kilowatt-hour, were even more competitive than 2004's excellent rates - ranking third for commercial users (up from sixth) and seventh for residential users (up from eighth) for all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Overall, Missouri was the 10th cheapest state for electrical rates -- up from 2004's 11th.

[Read more...](#)



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St. Louis Science Center Receives Youth Opportunities Tax Credits

The St. Louis Science Center Foundation will receive over \$249,000 in state tax credits for the organization's Youth Exploring Science - City Science project that will increase leadership and employment skills while youth teach and present

FOCUS ON WORKFORCE

MAWD Conference set for next week

On April 3-5, the Missouri Association of Workforce Development will be holding its annual conference at the Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake Ozark. At this conference, front line workforce practitioners will receive training on such topics as Career Advising, Holistic Life Skills, Youth Tools for

FOCUS ON BUSINESS

MU Competes for Bio-and Agro-Defense Facility

University researchers are working to convince MU officials to compete for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's national bio-and agro-defense facility to study ways to protect U.S. citizens from a bioterrorist attack. [Read more...](#)

science concepts around urban topics. The tax credits are expected to leverage up to \$498,224 in local contributions to help fund the project. [Read more...](#)

Columbia Ranks #8 on 2006 list of "America's TOP 100 Places to Live"

Since 1997 HomeRoute & Relocate America have been compiling a list of America's Top 100 Places to Live. The list is unique in that it's the only list of its kind that is determined by statistics and feedback of the people who live, work & play in these communities. This year, Columbia ranks as the 8th top place to live in America and Springfield ranks in the top 100. [Read more...](#)

Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri Receive YOP Tax Credits

Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri will receive \$250,000 in state tax credits for the organization's CALL, CHOICES, and WINGS programs that will provide knowledge, awareness and training for subjects such as violence, teen pregnancy and drugs and alcohol. The organization is expected to leverage up to \$500,000 in local contributions to help fund the projects, which provides services to over 1,000 youth throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. [Read more...](#)

Success, Effective Business Outreach, Employed Worker Training and Workforce Linkage Training. Attendees will also hear valuable information from national workforce consultants Beverly Ford and Celina Shands. Shands will also be conducting a special info-share session with the Statewide Marketing Taskforce during this conference. DWD Director Rod Nunn will be the closing plenary speaker, and states: "I support professional development opportunities like this that foster excellence in Missouri's workforce system." See www.mo-awd.org for more information or call DWD Training Coordinator Lisa Johnson at 573.522.3017.

Minority Construction Job Training

The multi-million dollar I-64 interstate highway project in the St. Louis area is moving forward with their plan to hire a large minority workforce for the construction contracts. More than \$2 million of the project budget will go to train minority, women and low-income workers for the project. The project is scheduled to run from 2007- 2010. Metropolitan Congregations United has set a goal of 30 percent for the number of minorities hired on the project. They intend to use and improve the training programs for construction jobs already in place to reach those goals. [Read more...](#)

Washington Univ. Enters Agreement with Boston Firm

Wilmington, Mass.-based Charles River Laboratories International Inc. has entered into a licensing agreement with Washington University to use the school's culture system technology. [Read more...](#)

St. Louis Firm to Team Up with Abbott Laboratories

Tripos Inc. announced last week that it will partner with Abbott Laboratories to design, synthesize and purify high-quality, drug-like compounds to expand Abbott's compound file collection. Tripos provides discovery chemistry, integrated discovery software products and discovery research services to various industries. [Read more...](#)

Doing Business in Russia, April 20, 2006, Kansas City

Encompassing eleven time zones, Russia is the largest country in the world by landmass. Russia continues to be a major, fast-moving and growing economy offering opportunity and challenge in equal measure. Join the U.S Department of Commerce's Export Assistance Center in Kansas City for a video-conference with Moscow on April 20, 2006. See calendar event or [read more.](#)

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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL NEWS

Kansas City Creates International Committee



Kansas City Mayor Kay Barnes has announced the formation of the Kansas City Council's International Committee. The mission of the five-person committee is to support Kansas City's international program and provide leadership in advancing the city's global standing and outreach. [Read more...](#)

Atlanta Seeks to Form Bioscience District

An Atlanta downtown corridor, including Grady Hospital, Georgia State University and portions of the Georgia Institute of Technology could become a formal bioscience district, pending the results of a feasibility study. GSU's \$500-million University Science Park, which includes a \$77 million Science Teaching Laboratory and a \$65 million Science Research Laboratory, along with the Economic Development Incubator, will draw private companies to the area. Georgia Tech is also pumping money into the downtown with its 128,000-square-foot Technology Enterprise Park. [Read more...](#)



\$74,000 Illinois Training Grant Will Spur Biotech Jobs



The Illinois Corn Growers Association will receive a \$74,000 state training grant to be used to prepare Illinois college students for careers in biotechnology. The High Technology School-to-Work training grant, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, is designed to transition college students from school to high-skilled, high-paying jobs in biotechnology. [Read more...](#)

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